

Select Page



The View Is Always Better at the Top

Jul 8, 2021 | Arkansas United Methodist



Pinnacle Mountain. Photo by Joshua J. Cotten on Unsplash

By Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor



Have you ever looked up from the bottom of a mountain and thought to yourself “there’s no way I’m getting up there”?

Maybe you were ambitious and thought you could traverse a hike through the woods and up the side of that mountain, but now, you're three miles in, tired, dehydrated, maybe a little hungry because you forgot breakfast that morning, and you're staring up at what seems like an impossible feat.

If you've ever hiked the East Summit Trail at Pinnacle Mountain in Little Rock, you know exactly what I'm talking about. It's a nice little meandering walk through the woods for about a half-mile, but then you arrive at an impossibly large mound of boulders staring at you and just daring you to try to conquer it.

But also, if you know that trail, you know that getting to the top is absolutely worth the challenge.

Because once you get over that last stretch of boulders at the peak, you are rewarded with a stunning view of the surrounding landscape. From the top of the mountain, 1,013 feet above sea level, you get a wonderful view of Pinnacle Mountain State Park, as well as Lake Maumelle, the Maumelle and Little Maumelle Rivers, the Arkansas River, and even the downtown Little Rock skyline.

Every time I get to the top of the summit, I just have to sit and take it all in for a while.

Hiking up a steep mountain is a bit like life. You sometimes find yourself at the bottom of your journey, tired, unsure, and scared to face what seems like an impossible task before you.

And the journey is anything but easy. You end up exhausted, winded, perhaps a little bruised and scratched up from a few small tumbles you took along the way. But once you get to the top, the reward is no doubt worth that difficult climb.

Right now, I think the United Methodist Church, and the world, are still climbing to the top of that summit. We thought we were going to reach it in 2020, but it seems like God had other plans for us.

We are still working through our fierce disagreements on LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church. We have deep theological differences that need to be healed. We are just now getting to a point where the coronavirus pandemic seems to be under control in the United States, although in other parts of the world, it is still raging uncontrollably. And racism in the world and the church is anything but resolved, although we have made great strides in recognizing the hurt and pain that have been directed toward our Black and Brown brothers and sisters throughout American history.

Bishop Mueller recently said in his Episcopal Address to the 2021 Annual Conference that he believes we are experiencing the gift of an unexpected pause right now. I believe the same; we're halfway up the summit, taking a granola and water break before we conquer the remainder of the trail.

I don't know what the future holds for the church; I hope that whatever the outcome, it is God's will and that every side finds peace and comfort in the decision that is made. Similarly, I don't know when the pandemic will end, or when we'll finally make reparations for systemic and systematic racism.

I do know that God doesn't leave us wondering where we should look when we face a mountain. God says, simply, to look to God.

One of the most famous verses about mountains, of course, is the one about having faith like a mustard seed, but I find Psalm 121:1-2 to be a little more relevant to my mountain metaphor.

"I look up to the mountains; does my strength come from mountains? No, my strength comes from God, who made heaven, and earth, and mountains." – Psalm 121:1-2, The Message

Take heart, knowing that the path that's left before us is not as long as it seems, and once we get to the summit, we should pause and take time to reflect on all that we have learned before we head down the other side.

Because the view is always better at the top.

Share this:

Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



Print



Email



English

Archives

[July 2021](#)[June 2021](#)[May 2021](#)[April 2021](#)[March 2021](#)[February 2021](#)[January 2021](#)